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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 012132

S/CT FOR REAP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SPAIN: 1998 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: A. STATE 202128
-- B. 97 MADRID 11809

1. THE BASQUE TERRORIST GROUP ETA ANNOUNCED A UNILATERAL AND UNCONDITIONAL CEASE-FIRE ON SEPTEMBER 16. THE CEASE-FIRE HAS HELD. PRIOR TO THE CEASE-FIRE, ETA KILLED SIX PERSONS IN 1998. PRESIDENT AZNAR CALLED NOVEMBER 3 FOR DIRECT TALKS WITH ETA ON WAYS TO MAKE THE CEASE FIRE PERMANENT. THOSE TALKS HAVE NOT OFFICIALLY BEGUN. THE GOVERNMENT AND ETA APPEAR TO HAVE DIFFERING AGENDAS FOR SUCH TALKS, WITH THE GOVERNMENT OFFERING SOME MEASURES OF RELIEF FOR ETA'S MORE THAN 500 PRISONERS AND ESTIMATED 1,000 EXILEES WHILE ETA WANTS TO INCLUDE POLITICAL ISSUES OF SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION. THE MARXIST TERRORIST GROUP GRAPO RE-EMERGED IN 1998 AFTER A THREE YEAR HIATUS. THE GOVERNMENT DISCOUNTS THE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY OF GRAPO BUT THE ORGANIZATION CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR A NUMBER OF BOMBINGS, AND SOME BUSINESSMEN HAVE RECEIVED EXTORTION LETTERS SIGNED BY GRAPO. SPAIN SIGNED THE ELEVENTH TERRORISM CONVENTION IN 1998. THE GOS EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR U.S. ATTACKS ON BIN LADIN TERRORIST FACILITIES IN AFGHANISTAN AND SUDAN. A YEAR-LONG EFFORT BY SPAIN TO EXTRADITE ACCUSED ETA TERRORIST RAMON ALDASORO FROM THE UNITED STATES SUFFERED A SETBACK WHEN A U.S. DISTRICT COURT JUDGE GRANTED A PETITION FOR A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS FILED BY ALDASORO'S ATTORNEY'S. THERE WERE NO ACTS OF TERRORISM IN SPAIN IN 1998 AGAINST OR AFFECTING U.S. CITIZENS OR FACILITIES.

2. THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO PARAGRAPH 3 REFTTEL.

A) ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS OF ETA TERRORISTS WERE ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THERE ARE 530 ETA TERRORISTS IN JAIL AND ABOUT TWICE THAT MANY IN EXILE. BELEN GONZALEZ PENALVA, AN ETA TERRORIST WHOSE EXTRADITION THE GOS HAD SOUGHT FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CONNECTION WITH A 1985 BOMBING IN WHICH AN AMERICAN CITIZEN WAS KILLED, LEFT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN OCTOBER AND HER CURRENT WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN.

B) THE U.S. DID NOT REQUEST THE EXTRADITION OF ANY SUSPECTED TERRORISTS FROM SPAIN IN 1998. A SPANISH REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION FROM THE U.S. OF ACCUSED ETA TERRORIST RAMON ALDASORO WAS STYMIED BY A WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS ISSUED BY A U.S. FEDERAL JUDGE IN FLORIDA. THE U.S. IS APPEALING THE WRIT. SPAIN CONTINUED TO SEEK, WITH SOME SUCCESS, EXTRADITIONS FROM VARIOUS LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES AND FRANCE OF ETA FUGITIVES.

C) THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT IMPEDIMENTS TO HOST GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION OR EXTRADITION OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS.

D) THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO SPEAK OUT AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS CONDEMNING TERRORIST ACTS, INCLUDING THE BOMBINGS OF THE U.S. EMBASSIES IN KENYA AND TANZANIA. A STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER SUPPORTED U.S. STRIKES AGAINST BIN LADIN FACILITIES IN SUDAN AND AFGHANISTAN.

E) THE GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF COUNTERTERRORISM PREOCCUPATION CONTINUES TO BE ETA. IN ADDITION TO ONGOING POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION TO BREAK UP ETA COMMANDOS AND ARREST THEIR MEMBERS, THE GOVERNMENT IN 1998 UNDERTOOK A SERIES OF MEASURES DESIGNED TO DEBILITATE ETA'S FINANCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE. THESE MEASURES INCLUDED ATTEMPTS TO LIMIT ETA'S FUND RAISING CAPABILITIES, SHUT DOWN BUSINESSES WITH ETA INVOLVEMENT, AND LOCATE ETA'S FINANCIAL ASSETS. IN JULY THE GOVERNMENT SHUT DOWN THE PRO-ETA NEWSPAPER "EGIN."

F) THERE WAS NO SPANISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM IN 1998.

G) THE GOVERNMENT MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF A TERRORIST-SUPPORTING STATE ON A TERRORISM ISSUE IN 1998.

H) THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE SINCE 1997 IN THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD TERRORISM, INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC.

I) U.S.-SPANISH ANTI-TERRORIST COOPERATION OCCURS ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF OPERATIONAL CONTACTS INVOLVING VARIOUS AGENCIES OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. COOPERATION ALSO OCCURS IN MULTILATERAL FORA AND BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE EU, OF WHICH SPAIN IS A MEMBER. EARLIER THIS YEAR THE U.S., CITING LIMITED RESOURCES AND TIME CONSTRAINTS ON THE U.S. OFFICIALS WHO WOULD BE INVOLVED, DECLINED A SPANISH REQUEST TO INSTITUTIONALIZE BILATERAL COUNTERTERRORISM CONSULTATIONS, HELD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MAY 1997 IN MADRID.

J) NO ACTS OF TERRORISM AGAINST U.S. CITIZENS OR INTERESTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE ON SPANISH TERRITORY IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS. IN 1996 THE GOS EXTRADITED ACHILLE LAURO HIJACKER MAJID AL-MOLQI TO ITALY, FROM WHERE HE HAD ESCAPED FROM PAROLE.

K) THE USG HAS NOT IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS SOUGHT SPANISH COOPERATION IN THE PREVENTION OF ANY PARTICULAR ACT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AGAINST U.S. CITIZENS OR INTERESTS.

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